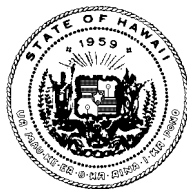


JOSH GREEN, M.D.
GOVERNOR
KE KIA'ĀINA



CATHY BETTS
DIRECTOR
KA LUNA HO'ŌKELE

JOSEPH CAMPOS II
DEPUTY DIRECTOR
KA HOPE LUNA HO'ŌKELE

STATE OF HAWAII
KA MOKU'ĀINA O HAWAI'I
DEPARTMENT OF HUMAN SERVICES
KA 'OIHANA MĀLAMA LAWELAWE KANAKA
Office of the Director
P. O. Box 339
Honolulu, Hawaii 96809-0339

TRISTA SPEER
DEPUTY DIRECTOR
KA HOPE LUNA HO'ŌKELE

March 26, 2024

TO: The Honorable Representative Della Au Belatti, Chair
House Committee on Health & Homelessness

FROM: Cathy Betts, Director

SUBJECT: **HCR 141/ HR 123 – RESOLVING TO END HOMELESSNESS ON MAUI.**

Hearing: March 27, 2024, 11:10 a.m.
Conference Room 329, State Capitol & Video Conference

DEPARTMENT'S POSITION: The Department of Human Services (DHS) appreciates the Legislature's attention to the housing needs of individuals and families experiencing homelessness Statewide and the focus on the critical housing needs of Maui residents following the August 8 wildfires.

We support increasing affordable and low-income housing inventory across the State, including efforts by the State Office on Homelessness and Housing Solutions to implement Ohana Zone Pilot Programs and Kauhale sites and the Hawaii Public Housing Authority's (HPHA) efforts to redevelop and upgrade its properties, including the HPHA properties destroyed in the August 8 wildfires.

DHS is also leading the Governor's initiative Ka La'i Ola to construct 450 modular units on State land under the control of the Hawai'i Housing Finance and Development Corporation (HHFDC) FDC at Leiali'i. This site was identified after community engagement and hearing community members' sentiments that were against the building at Launiupoko. Site work on Ka La'i Ola is scheduled to begin in April 2024.

Additional sites were examined in West and Central Maui. Each site poses unique challenges that make Leiali'i the best option. Notably, the infrastructure improvement will be permanent and intended to be used by the Department of Hawaiian Home Lands for future beneficiary development.

Regarding support services for wildfire survivors, DHS is the lead agency of the Disaster Case Management program, which launched on February 21, 2024. The program aims to assist every survivor with an individual recovery plan.

Notably, DHS requests the Legislature's support for executive budget requests for the Maui wildfire recovery and also increases funds available for statewide contracted services procured by the Homeless Programs Office. The Department's budget request to support DHS emergency management efforts on Maui will allow DHS to have additional human and IT resources necessary to oversee recovery efforts and assist in providing concrete needs to Maui survivors who are not eligible for federal disaster assistance.

The budget request for the Homeless Programs Office to increase funds for statewide contracted services is to help providers meet some of the increasing costs of providing services, including statutory increases to the minimum wage. These contract amounts have not increased since 2016, and the high turnover of outreach and shelter staff reduces the effectiveness of those services. Individuals and families experiencing homelessness, who may also be suffering from mental health or substance abuse disorders, need frequent engagement to develop rapport and trust to return to housing. The lack of staff capacity and continuity leads to multiple cascading impacts that lengthen peoples' unsheltered experiences and increase their vulnerabilities, and also impact public and private landowners where encampments become more entrenched.

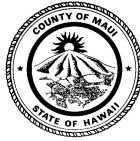
Thank you for the opportunity to provide comments on this resolution.

Council Chair
Alice L. Lee

Vice-Chair
Yuki Lei K. Sugimura

Presiding Officer Pro Tempore
Tasha Kama

Councilmembers
Tom Cook
Gabe Johnson
Tamara Paltin
Keani N.W. Rawlins-Fernandez
Shane M. Sinenci
Nohelani U'u-Hodgins



Director of Council Services
David M. Raatz, Jr., Esq.

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Richelle K. Kawasaki, Esq.

COUNTY COUNCIL
COUNTY OF MAUI
200 S. HIGH STREET
WAILUKU, MAUI, HAWAII 96793
www.MauiCounty.us

March 26, 2024

TO: The Honorable Della Au Belatti, Chair, and
Members of the Health & Homelessness Committee

FROM: Alice L. Lee
Council Chair

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Alice L. Lee", is written over the printed name and title.

SUBJECT: **HEARING OF MARCH 27, 2024; TESTIMONY IN SUPPORT OF HCR141
AND HR123, RESOLVING TO END HOMELESSNESS ON MAUI**

I **support** these resolutions that aim to resolve homelessness and house displaced wildfire victims on Maui.

I am providing this testimony in my capacity as an individual member of the Maui County Council.

I support these resolutions for the following reasons:

1. The August 2023 wildfires exacerbated West Maui's longstanding homelessness problem.
2. A 2018 Hawaii Appleseed for Law and Economic Justice cost-benefit analysis found that an investment of \$726 million over ten years to provide housing to those experiencing chronic homelessness would save over \$2 billion in healthcare and other costs.
3. Studies have shown that housing those without shelter leads to lower rates of arrests and incarceration, saving taxpayer money.

Thank you for your consideration.

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